fertilizer nutrients has registered a growth of 25%, as shown in the table below.

Production of Fertilizer Nutrients

(In Lakh Tonnes)

Year	Nitrogen	Phosphate	Total
1994-95	79.45	24.93	104.38
1995-96	87.77	25.58	113.35
1996-97	85.99	25.56	111.55
1997-98	100.86	29.75	130.61

During the same period, the production of urea in the central public sector units registered a growth of 16%, as shown in the table below:

(In Lakh Tonnes)

Year	Production of Urea in Public Sector Units
1994-95	51.68
1995-96	52.09
1996-97	47.30
1997-98	60.07

There was a decline of 9.2% in urea production in the central public sector units during 1996-97, as compared to 1995-96. This decline was on account of limitations in the supply of gas to Rashtriya Chemicals & Fertilizers Limited-Thal and of power to Fertilisers and Chemicals Travancore Limited and financial/movement constraints affecting the operation of National Fertilizers Limited.

(c) and (d) Fertilizer plants in the country have been designed to produce urea conform to the standards laid down in the Fertilizer Control Order. New Fertilizer capacities are based on the latest efficient technologies. In so far as the existing fertilizer plants are concerned, technological upgradation by way of retrofit, revamp and modernisation, etc. is a continuing process. Fertilizer units undertake these measures depending on their technical feasibility and financial viability.

Food poisoning in railway canteen at Tughlakabad

*347. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM:
SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of railway employees fell ill due to food poisoning after taking lunch at railway canteen, Tughlakabad as reported in the 'Statesman' dated 19th June, 1998;

(b) if so, the facts and details thereof;

(c) whether the quality of food etc., in various railway canteens is found to be highly substandard and unhygienic; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by Government to provide safe food in railway canteens and fix responsibility for those who were found responsible for such laxity?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): (a) and (b) An incident of food poisoning was reported in the canteen at Railway Diesel Shed, Tughlakabad on 18.6.1998. A total of 110 number of staff were affected. They were quickly sent to various hospitals escorted by Railway Doctors. Out of the 110, 51 workers were admitted/kept under observation. Condition of others did not warrant hospitalisation and therefore they were discharged. Out of the 51 workers admitted, two were kept overnight for observation while the remaining were released after some time. These two workers were also discharged the next day. A fact finding enquiry was ordered to go into the cause of the incident. The inquiry revealed the food poisoning occurred due to falling of a lizard in 'Dal'.

(c) No, Sir. The quality of food in railway canteens is not substandard or unhygienic. It was just an isolated incident.

(d) The question does not arise. As far as this isolated incident is concerned, three employees have been prima facie held responsible for not exercising adequate care and are being taken up under

Railway Servants (Discipline & Appeal) Rules.

Proposal to exclude sugar from PDS

*348. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:
SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering a proposal to exclude sugar from the public distribution system;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Kerala Government has opposed this move as it will result in the increase in the prices of sugar particularly in non-producing States like Kerala; and

(d) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA): (a) and (b) The Mahajan Committee constituted to study and make recommendations in respect of the sugarcane and sugar sectors, has submitted its report on 15.4.1998. One of the recommendations of the Committee is to discontinue supply of sugar to the PDS. It has been suggested that this may be phased out over a period of 2 years. It has also been suggested that the statutory levy percentage be reduced to 20% from the beginning of the next sugar season, and that it be retained at that level for two years. After the expiry of these two years, the collection of levy sugar from mills be abolished. Further, if Government wishes to continue PDS, the sugar be obtained at market prices from mills.

The views of the concerned Ministries/Departments, as well as State Governments/UT Administrations, have been called for on the suggestion for discontinuance of sugar from PDS. In this connection, a meeting under the Chairmanship of Minister of Food & Consumer Affairs was held on 25.6.98 in which the State Ministers for Food & Civil Supplies were invited and their views in the matter were ascertained. The Matter is under exmination in the Government.

(c) and (d) Yes, the Government of Kerala has expressed reservations in regard to the suggestion of discontinuance of sugar from PDS. The views of the Government of Kerala, as well as of other States/UTs, are under consideration in the Government.

Administering of spurious Polio Drop Vaccines

*349. SHRI JALALUDIN ANSARI:
SHRI N.R. DASARI:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that nearly 65000 children in Western UP were administered spurious polio drop vaccines imported from Belgium during the last pulse polio programme;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any enquiry has been conducted into the matter; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI): (a) to (d) Oral Polio Vaccine is administered to children under Universal Immunization Programme and under Pulse Polio Immunization Programme. Under Universal Immunization Programme, polio vaccine is administered in three doses, first at the age of six weeks, second at the age of 10 weeks and the third at the age of 14 weeks and a booster dose is given when the child is 1-1/2 years old. Under Pulse Polio Programme all children below the age of five years are given polio vaccine twice a year, once in December and again in the following January. Oral Polio vaccine for both these programmes is procured from Indian manufacturers and some vaccine is obtained as commodity